

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 L-02 SAJ-01 /050 R

66630

DRAFTED BY: EUR/SOV: M. KOVNER

APPROVED BY: EUR/SOV: M. KOVNER

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P 020040Z NOV 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 216002

LIMDIS

FOR CHARGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UR, PFOR (KOVNER, MILTON)

SUBJ: SOVIET RETALIATORY EXPULSION OF US DIPLOMAT

MOSCOW 4043 OF 6 AUG 69 BEING REPEATED FOR YOU INFO IN EVENT
CABLE HAS BEEN RETIRED FROM EMBASSY FILES.

QUOTE

SECRET MOSCOW 0443

SUBJ: SOVIET RETALIATORY EXPULSION OF U.S. DIPLOMAT

REF: STATE 115652, USUN 2387, USUN 2390, USUN 2422, STATE
123568, USUN 2526, USUN 2550

1. DEPUTY CHIEF MFA AMERICAN (ZINCHUK) CALLED IN DCM AUGUST 6
AND, REFERRING TO US EXPULSION OF COUNSELOR ANDREEV OF SOVIET UN
MISSION, SAID MINISTRY REQUESTS THAT OUR COUNSELOR FOR ECONOMIC
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AFFAIRS, MILTON KOVNER, LEAVE THE USSR.

2. DCM ASKED WHAT WAS REASON FOR THIS ACTION. ZINCHUK ANSWERED WITHOUT ELABORATION, "OTVETNYE MEPLY" (RETALIATORY MEASURES). HE ADDED USSR HAD NOT BEEN THE FIRST TO USE THIS FORMULA. UNDER QUESTIONING, HE SAID MINISTRY WAS NOT LEVELING ANY ACCUSATIONS AGAINST KOVVR, BUT IN VIEW OF THE ANDREEV CASE FOUND IT NECESSARY TO REQUEST KOVNER'S DEPARTURE.

3. DCM OBSERVED SOVIET ACTION WAS HARDLY RECIPROCAL. ANDREEV ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE SCOPE OF HIS OFFICIAL DUTIES, WHEREAS MINISTRY CONFIRMS THERE ARE NO CHARGES AGAINST KOVVR. ZINCHUK SIMPLY REPLIED THAT SOVIET UN MISSION HAD DENIED CHARGES AGAINST ANDREEV.

4. IN RESPONSE DCM'S QUESTION WHEN US HAD RESORTED TO RETALIATORY EXPULSION OF SOVIET PERSONNEL IN US, ZINCHUK SAID WASHINGTON HAD USED THIS FORMULA IN EXPELLING TASS CORRESPONDENT KOPYTIN.

5. DCM EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT SOVIETS HAD DECIDED TO MOVE DOWN THIS PATH SO SOON AFTER GROMYKO'S JULY 10 SPEECH ENDORSING BETTER RELATIONS WITH USSR. ARBITRARY EXPULSION OF KOVNER WOULD CREATE SERIOUS HARDSHIP FOR EMBASSY'S OPERATIONS AND WOULD REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL SACRIFICE BY KOVNER AND FAMILY WHO ARRIVED IN USSR ONLY TWO MONTHS AGO. DCM SAID HE WOULD REPORT MINISTRY'S ACTION TO AMBASSADOR AND RESERVED RIGHT, IF AMBASSADOR WISHED, TO DISCUSS THE CASE AT A HIGHER LEVEL. ZINCHUK REPLIED THAT INsofar AS MINISTRY WAS CONCERNED, CASE WAS CLOSED.

6. ZINCHUK NEXT MENTIONED THAT US HAD ALSO DENIED REENTRY VVYA TO SOVIET US MISSION SECOND SECRETARY IVANOV, AND THEN DROPPED THE SUBJECT.

7. IN RESPONSE DCM QUESTIONS, ZINCHUK SAID (A) SOVIETS PLANNED NO PUBLICITY, (B) KOVNER COULD HAVE ONE WEEK TO DEPART, (C) AND, SPEAKING UNOFFICIALLY, EXPULSION WOULD NOT MEAN KOVNER PERMANENTLY BARRED FROM RETURNING TO USSR. DCM SAID NOTHING ABOUT US INTENTIONS REGARDING PUBLICITY.

8. COMMENT: SOVVTS CLEARLY ARE INTENT ON HAVING ONE SACRIFICIAL
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AMERICAN COUNSELLOR TO CARRY OUT THEIR RETALIATION. THEIR SELECTION OF KOVNER WILL SERIOUSLY IMPAIR OUR OPERATIONS, WHEREAS, HAD THEY PICKED RICHMOND, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SUSTAIN LOSS, SINCE LATTER BEING REASSIGNED. WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD MAKE EFFORT TO RETAIN KOVVER. MFA AMERICAN SECTION CHIEF KORNIENKO MAY ATTEND SPASO RECEPTION THIS EVENING, AND AMBASSADOR WILL STRESS REPERCUSSIONS, INCLUDING LOSS OF KEY OFFICIAL CONCERNED WITH ORDERLY CONDUCT US-USSR ECONOMIC RELATIONS IF KOVNER IS EXPELLED.

GP-1. BEAM

UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 NOV 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: collinp0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE216002
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EUR/SOV: M. KOVNER
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731158/aaaabqod.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: STATE 115652, USUN 2387, USUN 2390,, USUN 2422, STATE
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: collinp0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28-Sep-2001 by willialc>; APPROVED <05 MAR 2002 by collinp0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET RETALIATORY EXPULSION OF US DIPLOMAT MOSCOW 4043 OF 6 AUG 69 BEING REPEATED FOR YOU INFO IN EVENT
TAGS: PFOR, UR, (KOVNER, MILTON)
To: MOSCOW
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005